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Composite Photography

APPLIED TO

THE PORTRAITS OF SHAKESPEARE

BY

WALTER ROGERS FURNESS

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CITY OF WASHINGTON

PHILADELPHIA
ROBERT M. LINDSAY
1885

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PREFACE

IN Mr FRANCIS GALTON'S interesting *Inquiries into Human Faculty* there is a Chapter on what is termed "Composite Photographs," by which name is designated the final photograph obtained from the exposure to the same sensitized plate of a series of human faces. A photograph thus "composed" presents, according to Mr Galton's ingenious theory, the face typical of the group. It was while reading this Chapter that the idea occurred to me of trying, by a similar process, to obtain a typical portrait of SHAKESPEARE.

It is not to be supposed that I felt at all sanguine of obtaining a satisfactory result.

The essential element for success, namely, identity of

position in the originals, was not to be counted on; all that I could hope for, from this somewhat fanciful experiment, would be, if there be any truth at all in Mr Galton's theory, a reflex, very shadowy at best, of the most characteristic features in the alleged portraits of Shakespeare. At any rate the experiment seemed worth trying, and if it satisfies no one it has at least interested me.

Under the guidance of my Father and of Mr Norris, the best living authority on the Portraits of Shakespeare, to both of whom I here gladly express my affectionate and respectful thanks, I selected nine portraits supposed to have the best authenticated pedigrees, including the Stratford Bust and the Death Mask. In six of these the face is turned to the left of the spectator, at nearly the same angle; in the remaining three it is turned in an opposite direction.

The first step was to reduce these portraits, by Photography, to the same size. That size was determined by the distance, in exactest measurement, between the eyes and the mouth. The photographs thus obtained were attached to a board by four pins, with the eyes and mouths superposed as accurately as possible by adjustment in a frame across which were stretched two intersecting fine silk threads, one passing horizontally through the line of the eyes, the other vertically through

the centre of the forehead and the middle of the upper lip.

Upon exposing each portrait to the sensitized plate for the same number of seconds, namely three, I found that the more marked outline of the Stratford Bust unduly predominated, not so much from the character of the features themselves, as from the fact that the photograph was a reproduction of a statue, and conversely the Chandos Portrait, dim and dark, failed to express itself in the composite. I was therefore obliged to apportion the exposure to the sensitized plate, allotting four seconds to the Chandos Portrait, two seconds to the Stratford Bust, and three seconds to each of the other four portraits.

For the like cause in the second group it was found on trial, that one and one-half seconds had to be given to the Death Mask, and seven seconds to each of the other Portraits.

Merely by way of experiment, three minor Composites were made by combining in pairs those portraits which seemed to bear to each other the closest resemblance, viz.: the Chandos and the Jansen; the Chandos and the Droeshout; the Felton Portrait and the Stratford Bust.

My thanks are due to the skill and experience of Mr W. Curtis Taylor.

I cannot but think that the photographs on the follow-

ing pages reveal a similarity of likeness running through portraits which at first sight present a quite dissimilar character.

W. R. F.

April, 1885.

There has been an unavoidable delay in obtaining the paper for these photographs, and in the meantime it has occurred to Mr W. Curtis Taylor, out of the experience gained in making these negatives with me, to apply "Composite Photography" to the portraits of Washington, and the interest manifested by the public in his success has given me no little encouragement.

W. R. F.

June, 1885.

A LIST OF THE PORTRAITS.

FACE TURNED TO THE LEFT.

CHANDOS PORTRAIT. MEZZOTINT BY SAMUEL COUSINS. INDIA PAPER PROOF. PUBLISHED BY THE SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY, 1849.

DROESHOUT PORTRAIT. PHOTO-LITHOGRAPH. PUBLISHED BY DAY & SONS, APRIL 9TH, 1864.

JANSEN PORTRAIT. ENGRAVED BY CHARLES TURNER. PUBLISHED BY ROBERT TRIPHOOK, JAN. 1ST, 1824.

STRATFORD PORTRAIT. PHOTOGRAPHED FROM ORIGINAL BY CUNDALL, DOWNES & CO.

FELTON PORTRAIT. ENGRAVED BY T. TROTTER. PUBLISHED BY WM. RICHARDSON, NOV. 1ST, 1794.

STRATFORD BUST. PHOTOGRAPHED FROM ORIGINAL BY TRUPP, BIRMINGHAM.

FACE TURNED TO THE RIGHT.

MARSHALL'S COPY OF THE DROESHOUT PORTRAIT. INDIA PAPER PROOF. PUBLISHED BY ROBERT THIPHOOK, 1824.

ASHBOURNE PORTRAIT. ENGRAVED BY G. F. STORM. JAN. 1ST, 1848.

DEATH MASK. PHOTOGRAPH OF ORIGINAL.

Composite

Chandos, Droeshout, Jansen, Stratford,

Felton, Bust

Composite Portrait

of the Chandos and the Jansen

Portrait

Composite Portrait

of the

Chandos and the Droeshout

Portraits

Composite Portrait

of the

Felton Portrait and the Stratford Bust

SHAKESPEARE.

Composite

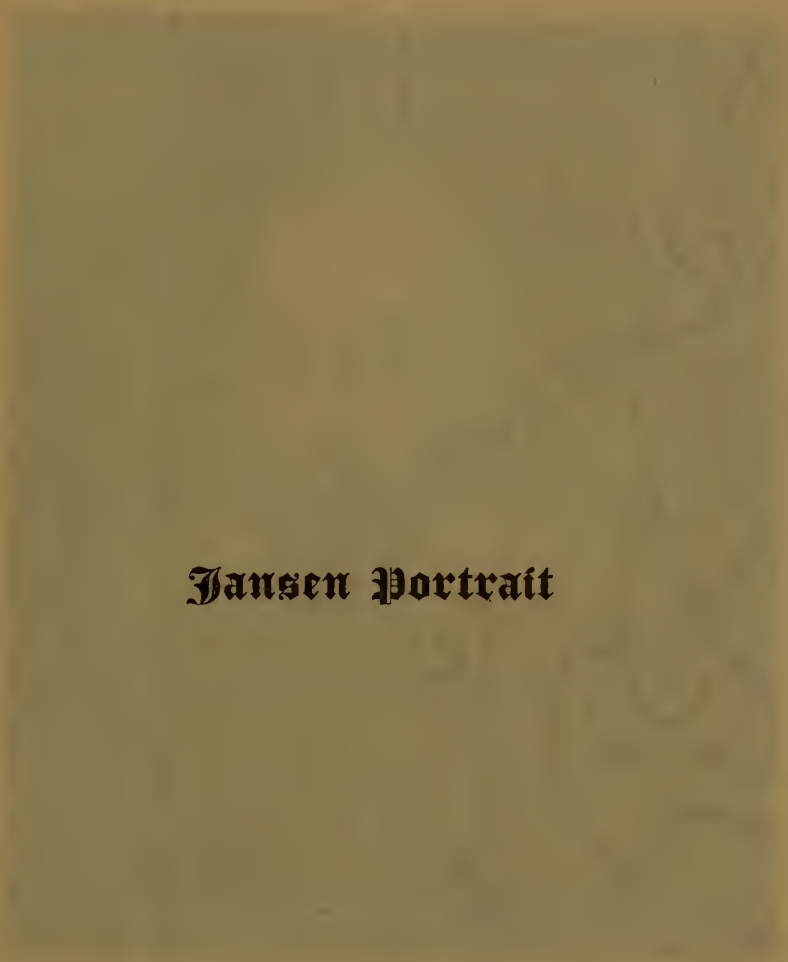
Marshall's Droeshout, Ashbourne,

Death Mask

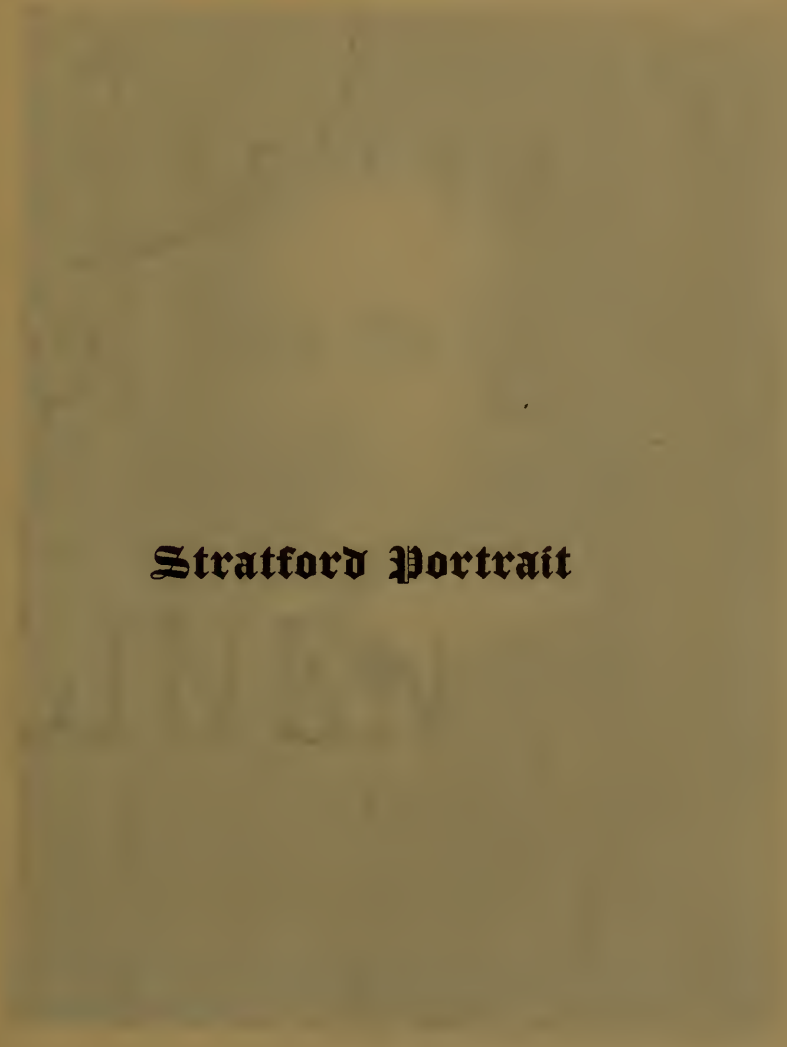
Chandos Portrait

Droeshout Portrait

SHAKESPEARE.



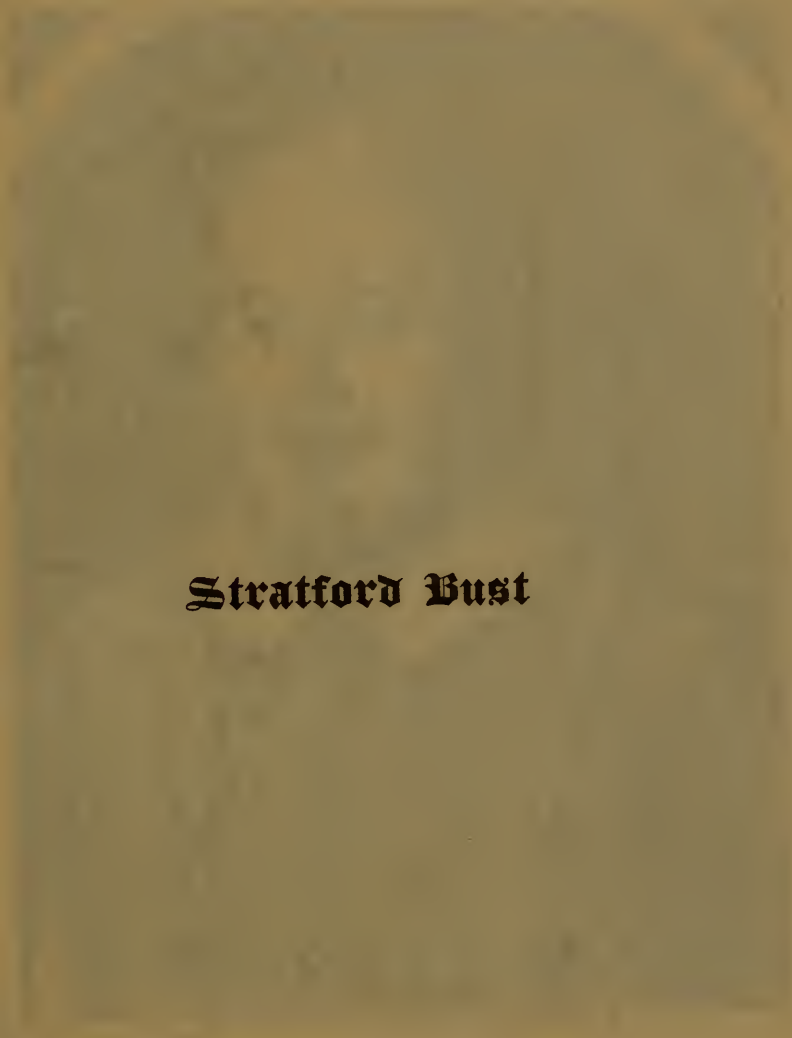
Jansen Portrait



Stratford Portrait

Felton Portrait

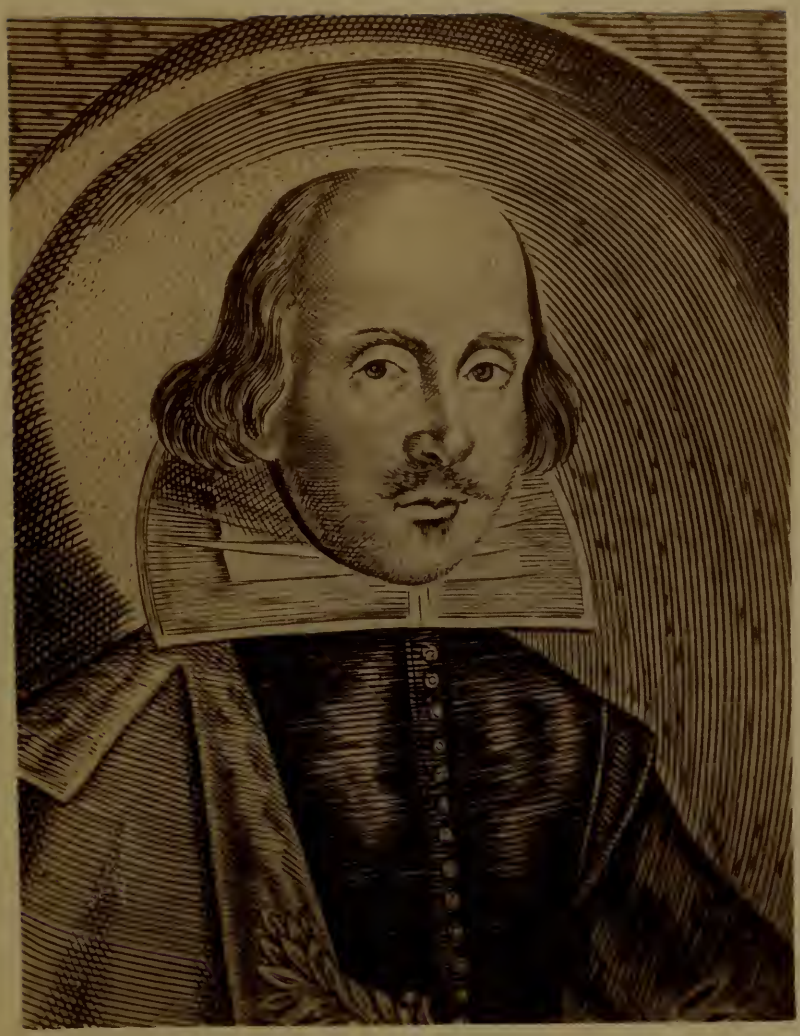
Guil Shakspeare
1597



Stratford Bust

Marshall's Copy

of the Droeshout Portrait



Ashbourne Portrait

Death Mask

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Feb. 2009

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